Canadian Centre
for Foreign Policy
Development

Centre canadien
pour le développement
de la politique étrangère

125 promenade Sussex Drive, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G2
Telephone/Téléphone : 613 944 8279 Fax/Télécopieur : 613 944 0687

1019.2 E

The Human Security Paradigm Shift: A New Lens on Canadian Foreign Policy?

June 18, 1999

Canada

104-01007/

Canadian Centre
For Foreign Policy
Development

Centre canadien
pour le développement
de la politique étrangère

The Human Security Paradigm Shift: A New Lens on Canadian Foreign Policy?

June 18, 1999

125 promenade Sussex Drive, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G2
Telephone/Téléphone : 613 944 8278 Fax/Télécopieur : 613 944 0687
www.cfp-pec.gc.ca

The Human Security Paradigm Shift: A New Lens on Canadian Foreign Policy?
Report of the UBC Symposium on Human Security
June 18, 1999

1. Introduction/ Background to Symposium

A one day symposium on Human Security and Canadian Foreign Policy was organized by the Institute of International Relations (UBC) and sponsored by the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development. The event was held on June 18, 1999 at the University of Toronto. The symposium brought together 17 academics and government representatives broadly sympathetic to the concept of human security. This paper is an attempt to summarize the discussion which took place and highlight some of the key ideas raised in the course of day.

The Symposium was the idea of Will Bain, a doctoral student at UBC, prompted by a concern over the dearth of discussion in the Canadian academic community about human security. The increasing use of this term by Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lloyd Axworthy, and other politicians suggested a need to clarify what is meant by human security, and to examine it critically, in both theory and practice. In this context, the June roundtable sought to consider the meaning, scope and practice of human security, as well as the implications, generally speaking, for Canadian foreign policy. At the time the discussion took place, the intervention by NATO in Kosovo was at the forefront of Canadian foreign policy and figures as a key case study in the discussion, particularly concerning the use of force in humanitarian intervention.

In writing this report, the authors wish to provide both some fresh ideas, from outside of government, about the concept of human security in practical terms for government officials, as well as highlight some of the profound theoretical questions such a paradigmatic shift poses for academics, particularly scholars of International Relations theory. While the ideas came out of the discussions held, the organization of this material, and the themes drawn from the discussion are the sole responsibility of the authors.

2. Human Security: Definition and Scope

The notion of the human being as the referent object for defining security is a new development, as is the idea that security includes human rights, freedom from state violence and other non-military threats. The real meaning of 'human security', according to the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, is 'safety for people'.[1] There is, however, a lack of clarity about what this means in policy terms, a perceived mismatch between the idea of human security and the practices and policy tools of domestic and international institutions, and some real debate, even amongst those who support the objective, about the means to achieve this end. In addition, the philosophical and normative underpinnings of the concept deserve closer scrutiny.

---

[1] *Human Security: Safety for People in a Changing World*, DFAIT, Canada, April, 1999.

and livelihoods. In any such analysis, there may be a distinction between what people subjectively feel they need to be secure and what an objective analysis of the roots of their insecurity would suggest. Human security should incorporate both of these threads: what people perceive to be threatening and an objective analysis of the sources of the threats to people's security.

- How people define their own security is critical. Different groups will conceive of security in different ways. Indeed one group's sense of security may be at the expense of another group. These conflicting perceptions must be factored in to the analysis of the appropriate action to be taken. Secondly, people's perceptions of insecurity often do not fit the traditional definitions of 'threat' or insecurity in foreign policy . Two recent surveys undertaken in Sri Lanka, and mentioned during the course of our discussions, illustrate this point. In ranking their concerns, displaced Sri Lankans named employment, water, education and food as their most pressing concerns. War ranked last. Thus traditional notions of military security were far from first on their list. Policy makers working with a 'human security' lens must, to the extent possible, encourage, consult, listen to and work with the people, to find out their perceptions of what would make their world more secure. Civil society is an important conduit for such an exchange of views between governments and the population at large.

- Conceptually and strategically, human security can usefully be linked to both human development and human rights. Ensuring one often serves the ends of the other. But while they overlap, they are not synonymous. Threats which may rank high in human security terms may be marginal to, or difficult to articulate in the language of, either of these other two humanitarian principles. On the other hand, including human rights as part of the human security agenda not only places the political impetus of human security into a long established international law tradition around human rights, but it provides an international foundation for challenging states which create insecurity for their own people.

- Human security highlights changing and/or contested conceptions of the relationship between 'security' and 'the state'. In particular, a militarized conception of state security grounded in the Cold War is being challenged. First, because many threats are non-military in either their source or solution. Second, because some forms of human insecurity are the direct result of actions taken by the military or state itself against its own population (internally displaced persons, human rights abuses and intra-state armed conflict).

- It should be noted that human insecurity may also be caused by *the absence of a state* capable of coping with basic threats to individual safety, let alone other threats to collective security (e.g. disease, environmental problems, warlords, drugs, terrorism, etc.). Using a human security lens to consider any given problem thus should not be seen as 'anti-state'. In some contexts, the application of the human security lens may result in a call for the financial and technical support of a given state, that is capacity-building, as a first priority. It may also mean bolstering the private sector, through trade agreements and economic development. Neither state-building nor trade should be seen as outside the potential tools that can be used to secure people's lives and livelihoods.

Several key foundational questions highlighted by participants included:

- In speaking of the goals of human security, are we implicitly promoting a Northern or Western agenda? How can countries advocating human security avoid seeming paternalistic and neo-colonial in their approach?

- Does human security smuggle in 'standards of civilization' and in so doing imply that certain groups/ nations are unable or unfit to rule or fulfil the obligations set out in the UN Charter, and therefore are not entitled to the right of sovereignty and non-intervention?

- What degree of intervention into the affairs of other states is permissible in seeking to ensure that a minimum standard of human security is provided? What are the implications for the potential arbitrary expression of power, in the name of humanitarian intervention, by the north over countries in the south?

Proponents of human security are faced with the question of how to frame the language of the concept in terms other than Western, liberal values, in order to win greater support amongst the G-77.

One suggested option was to move away from emphasis on the individual to a more inclusive notion of 'safety for people' or 'securing the lives and livelihoods of people and their communities'. Taking human security to be a *lens* which considers the end of human security in the context of each country's particular political landscape, rather than a set of universally and uniformally applied set of policy tools will help to ensure that solutions are both effective and culturally appropriate. Engaging civil society in the region concerned will also facilitate a culturally sensitive response to the people of that region. It is also important to gain the support of non-Western countries through alliances with sympathetic states; Thailand and South Africa's participation in recent human security discussions is encouraging in this respect.

4. The Practice of Human Security: The Need for Early Action

Participants widely agreed that a key priority in the practice of human security is increasing emphasis on (and resources devoted to) prevention of conflicts which threaten human security. This is particularly true in situations of mass violence. Human security entails increased attempts to avert conflicts in other parts of the world, thereby preventing human suffering. Too frequently the 'old' Cold War policy was war by proxy; a new people-centered approach to security requires that we address the causes of conflict and take preventative measures through such means as pre-conflict peace-building.

Participants considered why human security is often invoked post-conflict, despite the 'early warning' mechanisms which exist. It was suggested that it is difficult for states to mobilize resources prior to civilian casualties and subsequent calls for action often result in disagreement amongst states about the best way to force rogue states to comply with conflict prevention measures. Finally, issues of national sovereignty, international law, and lack of access often

5. Human Security and the Use of Force

Minister Axworthy has suggested that Kosovo is a 'concrete expression of this human security dynamic at work' and that NATO's air campaign 'should serve to dispel the misconception that military force and the human security agenda are mutually exclusive'.[5] Such statements endorse the precedent of the use of force in human security practice. More recently, the question of the protection of civilians, through forcible intervention by the international community, has been taken up by the Secretary General of the United Nations and Minister Axworthy at the September 1999 UN General Assembly.

Participants engaged in an animated discussion on whether the use of force was consistent with the ethos and agenda of human security. In particular, participants considered whether the intervention undertaken in Kosovo accorded with the principles of human security. There was agreement among most of the participants that human security, under certain circumstances, entails the use of force. To restore human security to the population of a failed state may require forcibly intervening in the sovereign affairs of states. All of the participants agreed that the engagement of a military alliance in such an intervention is a profound departure from past international practice and needs further analysis by the academic community.

Five key problems, fundamental to the relationship between the use of force and human security, were raised as potential foci for future study:

- Kosovo can be seen as the displacement of the security or safety of one group of people for another. Some argued that the intervention in Kosovo was premised upon bringing insecurity to the Serbians in Kosovo, in order to remove insecurity for the Albanian Kosovars. Given the number of conflicts in which two hostile and violent factions can find security only in the insecurity of the other, the question of how to employ force to ensure the long-term security of *both* sides must be addressed. There may be a contradiction inherent in such practice.

- Kosovo can also be seen as the failure of human security as a preventative strategy. To what extent does the potential use of force by a military alliance undermine the preventative side of human security? This question needs to be considered in light of human security becoming, as one participant said, a new '*raison d'être*' for NATO in a post-Cold War world, and the implications for the UN.

- The practice of human security to date has been focused on military activities and issues (forcible intervention, small arms, mines, etc.); further, as one participant suggested, the UN Security Council resolution passed with respect to Kosovo was framed, in part, in the 'old' language of bringing a traditional peace to Kosovo, and there was little mention of human

---

[5] See 'Kosovo and the Human Security Agenda - Notes for an Address by the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Foreign Affairs', to the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Relations, Princeton University, April 7, 1999.

In summary, there was considerable debate on whether human security was compatible with the use of force. On one hand, human security may include obligations to citizens of other countries, and to fulfil such obligations may require forcible military intervention. On the other, such an intervention results in civilian casualties of the kind that human security seeks to avoid, and sets profound new precedents for military activity. Where human security involves the use of force, a host of issues worthy of further consideration are raised.

6. Human Security: A New Role for International Organizations

Participants considered human security and its relationship to the UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly. The Security Council has proven largely ineffective in dealing with humanitarian crises caused by military conflict and this is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future. While the broader UN framework has proven more sympathetic to the human security agenda, effective action to deal with crises is hindered by the bureaucratic structure of the UN itself. The development and humanitarian aspect of human security will be aided by large-scale institutional reform of the UN.

The Kosovo intervention calls into question the role of the Security Council in the international order, particularly in view of the implications of a regional military organization (NATO) undertaking forcible humanitarian intervention outside of the UN apparatus. The Security Council has been marginalized on new security issues by a lack of political will to be involved and by an already over-committed capacity. This vacuum, has been filled by 'coalitions of the willing' and regional actors; a development which is profoundly unsettling for both supporters outside of, as well as many working within, the UN. This feeling may reflect a broader tension in the United Nations between proponents of human security/ human rights/ humanitarian intervention on one side, and those who wish to preserve the ascendance of sovereignty, non-use of force and non-intervention in the internal affairs of states on the other.

It was argued that the Security Council is increasingly problematic in the post-Cold War era. Moreover, the case was made that the great power veto is a serious obstacle to the practise of human security. It was also noted, however, that the veto was a condition for the Great Powers accepting the UN system as a means to avoid conflict. Since negotiated reform of the Security Council is seemingly impossible, change will need to come through evolving practices. Canada, with its current seat on the Security Council may want to consider ways of pushing this evolution forward.

Finally, it was noted that there are several underutilized tools available to the Security Council, such as the Genocide Convention. While the Security Council could draw authority from this Convention, it is necessary to clarify the definition of genocide, to expand the range of atrocities covered under the Convention, and to clarify the tools which may be used to prevent genocide before the Security Council can effectively implement this Convention.

Human security is more compatible with the broader UN framework than it is with the institution of the Security Council. This is in part due to the influence of Secretary General Annan, who is a 'norm entrepreneur' and an energetic proponent of the idea of human security within the UN.

genocide. Human security has a more receptive audience in the broader UN framework due in part to the General Secretary's support and to 'coalitions of the willing'. Prospects for implementing the human security agenda would be improved with reform of the UN institutional machinery, particularly in the area of conflict prevention.

7. Human Security and International Law

It was argued by one international law expert that, over the last fifty years, international law concerning human rights generally, and humanitarian intervention specifically, has laid down a strong legal framework within which the political agenda of human security may find important lessons and develop. In other words, the political project represented by the human security agenda may be built on the already existing precedents within international law.

It was pointed out that a fundamental tension of the UN Charter was the conflict between the rights of territorial integrity, sovereignty and non-intervention on one hand, and human rights as articulated the Preamble of the Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on the other. During the Cold War, territorial integrity was privileged; in the post-Cold War era, however, human rights law is gaining increasing prominence. The most recent shift is in part a response to two events: the genocides in Bosnia and Rwanda. From these events followed the implementation of the International War Crimes Tribunal, the push towards the formation of an International Criminal Court, and the British detention of General Pinochet.

A further key event in the shift towards the privileging of human rights is the intervention in Kosovo, as discussed above. Clearly NATO violated the norms of territorial integrity and non-intervention set out in Article 2 of the UN Charter. In addition, NATO rejected the terms of Article 53, that no enforcement action shall be taken under regional agencies without the authorization of the Security Council. It is significant that this intervention was justified on the basis of human rights.

There are several legal foundations for humanitarian intervention in international law, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a number of UN conventions, and the many regional declarations on human rights (particularly those articulated by the European community). In addition, there is a vast body of jurisprudence on human rights built up during the Cold War, as well as the contribution of ECOSOC during that time, and the ratification of treaties dealing with human rights. The human rights aspects of the UN Charter are gaining greater recognition and importance in the international community. Political change is 'catching up' with developments in international law, and intervention in support of these laws becomes possible in a way it was not during the Cold War. The culmination of all this activity is that the international community has come to accept human rights, even if it is still unsure about what these rights entail or how they should be implemented.

While there have been many positive developments in international human rights law, there remains ambiguity regarding the international legal right of forcible humanitarian intervention. That such a right exists is agreed upon by some and rejected by others. The jurisprudence in this area is mixed: take, for example, the advisory opinions of the International Court of Justice on

behind. As Minister Axworthy has noted, the practice of human security has led theory.[11] This is a clarion call to the academic community, particularly those involved in international relations theory, to address the thorny theoretical questions posed by human security (many of which were raised during the course of this symposium): is human security a northern/ neo-colonial/ paternalistic concept? With its strong relationship to human rights, is human security a categorical imperative which demands consistent application? Could such a foundation be abused by powerful states? If, on the other hand, we accept that human security, applied as a lens, "will differ in different contexts", do we risk the charge that the lens is applied only when it is convenient or beneficial for Canada to do so? Will such an approach create inconsistencies in Canadian foreign policy? Is the use of force and the possible death and injury of one group of civilians, in order to protect another group of civilians, an unavoidable feature of forcible intervention in the case of internal warfare? Is such an outcome consistent with the principles of human security?

Finally, the role of the international community must be addressed, both in terms of international law and organizations. While humanitarian intervention in the sovereign affairs of other states has an uncertain status in international law, recent actions of the international community may indicate a shift towards greater acceptability of humanitarian intervention. While the scope for implementing human security through the Security Council remains limited, the prospects for human security in the broader UN framework are more encouraging due to the emergence of 'coalitions of the willing' and the support of the Secretary General. Institutional reform of the UN machinery would improve prospects still further. Broad consensus emerged around the need for increased emphasis on conflict prevention and some general suggestions for addressing this difficulty were made. Ultimately, the prevention of conflicts should be central in the strategy for securing and maintaining the human security of populations around the world.

---

[11] Lloyd Axworthy, "Foreword", *Human Security: Safety for People in a Changing World*, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Canada. April 1999.

Human Security and Canadian Foreign Policy Symposium - I

Preliminary Program

June 18, 1999
Hart House
University of Toronto

Schedule of Events

Introductory Session (9:00 - 9:30)

Barbara Arneil/Steve Lee

Session A (9:30 - 11:00)

What does Human Security Mean? (Chair: Barbara Arneil)

A. Overview (5-10 minutes each):
1. What is Human Security - A View from Outside (Kenneth Bush)
2. The View from DFAIT (Don Hubert)
3. A Critique of Human Security (Rex Brynen)

B. General Discussion

BREAK (11:00 - 11:15)

Session B (11:15 - 1:00)

Human Security: Kosovo as a Case Study (Chair: Brian Job)

A. 5-10 minute presentations

1. Human Security in Light of the Kosovo Intervention (Michael Pearson)
2. Humanitarian Intervention and International Law (Don Fleming)

B. General Discussion

LUNCH (1:00 - 2:00)

Human Security and Canadian Foreign Policy Symposium

June 18, 1999
Hart House
University of Toronto

Participant Biographies

Barbara Arneil is an assistant professor in the political science department at UBC since July 1996. Her research interests are gender and liberal political theory. Prior to coming to UBC, she spent three years as Senior Policy Advisor to the Hon. Lloyd Axworthy, first in the Ministry of Human Resources Development and then the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Dr. Arneil has published a book on *John Locke and America: The Defense of English Colonialism,* and is about to publish a book entitled *Politics and Feminism*. She has also published an article on gender and peacebuilding in *Canadian Foreign Policy*. Dr. Arneil serves on the Foreign Minister's Advisory board, and the selection committees for both the B.C. Rhodes Scholarship and the B.C. Legislative Internship Programme.

William Bain is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of British Columbia. His thesis research concerns the practice of paternalism in international society. In addition to this research, he is co-editing and contributing to a collection of essays on Canadian foreign policy and human security. He is the author of 'Against Crusading: The Ethic of Human Security and Canadian Foreign Policy' which appears in the Spring 1999 issue of *Canadian Foreign Policy* and he has an article on international relations theory forthcoming in the *Review of International Studies*. He has also published on security issues in South Asia, American diplomatic history, and methods of modelling the diffusion of war.

Rex Brynen is associate professor of political science at McGill University. He has previously served as Jules Léger Fellow and as special advisor on peacebuilding at DFAIT, and as a consultant to CIDA, IDRC, PCO, the World Bank, and the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator in the Occupied Territories (UNSCO). His publications include A Very Political Economy: Peacebuilding and Foreign Aid in Palestine (forthcoming), Sanctuary and Survival: The PLO in Lebanon, and four edited or co-edited books on democratisation, regional conflict and national security in the Middle East.

Kenneth Bush is a Geneva-based Research Fellow with the Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, Dalhousie University, and a special advisor on humanitarian issues for DFAIT. He received his Ph.D. in Government from Cornell University and has held teaching positions at Queen's University, Carleton University, and Bilkent University (Ankara, Turkey). He has published on issues of peacebuilding, identity-based conflict, and bad governance. Current projects include: an evaluation framework to assess the peace and conflict impacts of development projects in conflict zones; a UNICEF study on Children, Education and "Ethnic" Conflict; and an OECD case study on the positive and negative impacts of aid in Sri Lanka.

Simon Dalby is associate professor in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies at Carleton University where he teaches courses on geopolitics and human

governance, human rights and constitutional systems promote or undermine human security. Professor Mendes was appointed and re-appointed by the Federal Cabinet to the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal from 1995 to 1998. He has published numerous articles in his areas of expertise, is the co-editor of several books and has recently co-authored the text *Towards a Fair Global Labour Market* published by Routledge, New York and London. He is presently the Director of the Human Rights Research and Education Centre at the University of Ottawa.

Heather Owens is a first-year MA student in International Relations at the University of British Columbia. She completed her BA (Hons) at Simon Fraser University in Dec. 1996. Her academic interests include international theory, international ethics, and Canadian foreign policy. Her MA thesis will focus on the normative foundations of human security.

Michael Pearson is currently Vice President at SAM Consulting Inc. in Ottawa. He served from 1993-97 as senior policy advisor to Ministers Ouellet and Axworthy. From 1987-93 he was policy advisor to the Official Opposition critics for foreign affairs, national defence and CIDA. He holds a BA (Hons) from the University of Toronto and a MA in International Affairs from Norman Paterson School, Carleton University. He is the author of the recent article: 'Reflections on Implementing Canadian Foreign Policy' in the winter 1999 issue of *Canadian Foreign Policy*.

Ernie Regehr is Adjunct Professor in peace and conflict studies at the University of Waterloo. He is also co-founder and current director of Project Ploughshares. He has held several positions related to disarmament and security and is presently co-coordinator of the International Resource Group on Disarmament and Security in the Horn of Africa. His publications include six volumes on peace and security issues and several related journal and magazine articles, and Parliamentary briefs.

Janice Gross Stein is the Harrowston Professor of Conflict Management and Negotiation in the Department of Political Science at the University of Toronto, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, and holds the title of University Professor. She specializes in conflict management, Middle East Politics and Canadian Foreign Policy. Some of her recent publications include "We all Lost the Cold War," (with Richard Ned Lebow), "Powder Keg in the Middle East: The Struggle for Gulf Security (edited with Geoffrey Kemp) and "Mean Times. Humanitarian Action in Complex Political Emergencies--Stark Choices, Cruel Dilemmas." (with Michael Bryans and Bruce Jones). She regularly lectures on conflict management at the Centre for National Security Studies in Ottawa, Canada and at the NATO Defense College in Rome, Italy. Dr. Stein is currently Chair of the Research Advisory Board to the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ottawa, Canada.